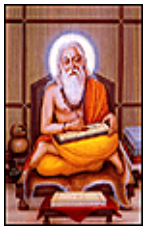
articles on hinduism

**The Beauty of the Vedas**
**By Paul William Roberts - "Empire of the Soul: Some journeys in India."** Pg 299 – 325
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1573226351/o/qid=947163138/sr=8-1/103-4559356-3757423

" In the beginning the Divine Will arose,
This was the first seed from the Creator's mind
Those who can see deeper by putting their mind and heart together as one
Found the underlying essence of all existence was deep
beyond all that exists,
Found the non-existent existing in the existent."

- RIG VEDA 10.129.4



The Vedas are the quintessence of classical Hindu philosophy. Thinking with your heart; loving with your mind. All yoga and meditation aim to attain this goal. Anything else is delusion, or worse. And when the heart sees, it sees the unknowable, nameless, formless, limitless, supreme God. He is called the nonexistent because he is eternal, beyond existence. God manifest is the fabric of creation itself. They are one.The heart that learns to think realizes this truth and merges into the eternal oneness. As William Blake put it, " If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is, infinite."

This merging with the Eternal, this inner transformation, this direct experience of Truth – these are the goals of which the Vedic sages speak. They explain the nature of the universe, of life, while admitting that Creation itself is the one unknowable mystery. To the Vedic sages, creation indicated that point before which there was no Creator, the line between indefinable nothingness and something delineated by attributes and function, at least. Like the moment before the Big Bang Theory. These concepts preoccupy high wisdom, the Truth far removed from mere religion.

Recent research and scholarship make it increasingly possible to believe that the Vedic era was the lost civilization whose legacy the Egyptians and the Indians inherited. There must have been one. There are too many similarities between hieroglyphic texts and Vedic ones, these in turn echoed in a somewhat diluted form and a confused fashion by the authors of Babylonian texts and the Old Testament.

In the **Hymn of Creation,** (Rig Veda 10.129.3 )

In the beginning there was darkness,
Utter darkness, darkness upon darkness,
The world then was merely its primordial essence, its formless fabric.
Thus what would become this world was first wrapped within the
All pervading power of the Eternal One
Before whom our material world is but a trifle brought into existence
By the omnipotent force of His will alone.

**Yet the Vedas go further, being philosophy, or really spiritual sciences, rather than myth.**

Who truly knows, who can honestly say where.
This universe cam from
And where it will vanish to at the End?
Those godlike wise men who claim they know were born long
After the birth of Creation.
Who then could know where our universe really came from?
And whoever knows or does not know where Creation came from,
Only one gazing at its vastness from the very roof of the final

**Heaven-**

"Only such a one could possibly know,
But does even He know? "

The Bible begins with the Creation. Before the Creation, however, there was the Creator, but does even He know what was there before He existed ?Long before such philosophical questions occurred to other historical peoples, Vedism posited the existence of something more ultimate than the one God. Whatever must have created Him. ***That*** is presuming the absolute and basic reality. Or is it? Long before such philosophical questions occurred to other historical peoples, Vedism posited the existence of something more ultimate than the one God. Whatever must have created Him. ***That*** is presuming the absolute and basic reality. Or is it?

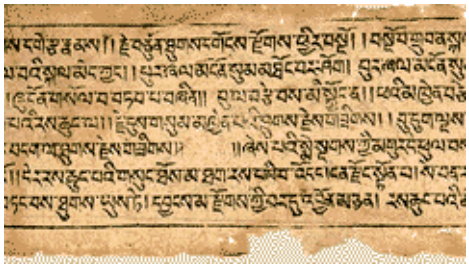
This is mysticism that is simultaneously metalogic and the kind of thing those bardic sages living some twenty-five thousand years ago thought about a great deal, according to Hindu tradition. The Vedas are the very first compositions mankind produced dating back at least twenty thousand years. Most orthodox historians and anthropologists strongly dispute such a view. They confuse writing with civilization and deny meaningful history to any people who did not leave a written record. A rich culture does not necessarily depend on writing, as the Celtic civilization proves. **They are the most sophisticated, most profoundly beautiful, and most complete presentations of what Aldous Huxley termed the "perennial philosophy" that is at the core of all religions. In modern academia, of course, there is not supposed to be any "ancient wisdom".**

The Vedas go much further in outlining the nature of reality than any other religious texts still in use. Some Vedic hymns paint the exquisite glories of the natural world: the preternatural beauty of predawn light, its rosy fingers holding the iridescent steel-blue sky; some celebrate the welcome cool of evening the scented breeze of a calm and refreshing night, its basalt dome studded with shimmering pearls and diamonds.

**Beauty permeates them, a reflection of Truth.**

The Vedas hold within them enough information to rebuild human civilization from scratch, if necessary. I think someone did believe that might be necessary one day.

The Vedas still represent eternal truth in the purest form ever written. And they are what drew me to India in the first place, what kept me there, and what draws me back still. Technology has certainly evolved at a rapid pace in the last century, when man began to gauge the quality of a civilization according to its level of technological advancement. However, **Arnold Toynbee**, the greatest historian of his age, maintained that the test for a major civilization was its fostering of a major religion. The human race, in fact, reveals a marked deterioration in the quality of its advancement over the past five hundred years. It's made no progress. Yet progress has become a



secular religion - even after Progress had advanced to the point of enabling mankind either to blast the planet into a radioactive wasteland or to poison it into uninhabitability. Better health care and global communications cannot be considered worth this kind of cost.

After Darwin, who was, to be fair, misunderstood, the concept undermined those sciences that developed around the same time as the theory of evolution - notably archaeology, evolution -as-progess became intrinsic to the very thinking process of Western man, conditioned into him from early childhood on.

Above all, the notion of advanced civilizations, of "ancient wisdom" existing long before written history even began, was complete heresy in the Church of Progress. The great cultures of Old Kingdom of Egypt and the Indus Valley were admired for the impressive remains they left, yet dismissed as ignorant and superstitious tyrannies dominated by megalomaniacal rulers obsessed with constructing monuments to their egos and subjugating the masses with mumbo jumbo. There is not a shred of evidence to support such a view, say, Old Kingdom Egypt.

The architectural achievements from such civilizations are feats of science and beauty that have never been equaled. Could evolution-as-progress be supported by a look at the Great Pyramid of Giza, the massive Temple of Amon at Karnac compared to ....what? The Empire State Building? Canary Wharf? The CNN Tower? Marshall McLuhan once wisely observed that you could determine a society's major concerns by observing for what purpose its largest building was constructed?

It is at this moment, according to their own internal evidence, that the first hymns of the Rig Veda were composed and passed to this new species, our distant ancestors. **The level of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom contained in the Vedic hymns does not just spring out of nowhere. Nor does the language containing these, mankind's loftiest thoughts. The great Rig Veda, in ten thousand verses, contains an astounding stock of some thirty-five thousand words, all of them imbued with great elasticity and enormous potentiality for the coming of new terms.**

For the Vedic sages, the three great Realities were Creator, Creation and Language - all sacred, all interlinked.

It is said in Hindu scriptures that the gods themselves envy human birth, because only within time is there free will and movement. Eternity in the Vedas is utter stillness; it exists entirely outside time, conceived of as that point where the future meets the past. There is no stable principle of evil in Vedic philosophy. There is no infernal realm for sinners. Its nondualism is really beyond monotheism - which creates a fundamental duality of God and man. Evil is not envisaged as a quality opposed to good. It is the absence of good, just as darkness is the absence of light, not its opposite quality.

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Truth behind all ephemeral truths. The Creation leads us to the Creator, to the highest knowledge, which is integrated into one. Like the Creator, human beings create, but humankind's creations are separate from humans themselves. Thus Vedic God is an architect whose structures all exist ***within*** him. Nothing can exist outside the Supreme Reality, and it in turn is within all:

" It is always moving, yet it never moves.
It is infinitely far away, yet it is close,
It is within all of this creation,
And yet it is beyond everything."

- YAJUR VEDA 22.5

Vedic terminology for "creation" implies that it is the steady process transforming ***asat***, the unmanifest, into ***sat,*** the manifest. In this sense, the entire-space-and-time continuum, all the vastness and infinite variety of creation, exists within the existence of the Eternal One - as if it were a concept in his mind. God is also called ***hiranyagarbha,*** the "Womb of Light."

" The Womb of Light existed before there was any other thing. It gave birth to all. It is the sole ruler of all existence, maintaining and upholding everything between earth and heaven. To the Lord alone, and to no others, we should offer all our love and respect."

- RIG VEDA 10.121.2: ATHARVA VEDA 4.2.7

This Supreme Reality is not a mere abstract concept of philosophy, either. It is a reality of the Vedas, whose invocation and evocation are essential for the whole process of spiritual growth and the fulfillment of life. God is a dynamic reality that should concern an individual every moment of his life. we forget this, or ignore it, but many hymns remind us that God never neglects us.

" God is always near. He never leaves. But near as He always is, no one and no thing ever sees Him. Such is the great Art of the Lord - Poetry that is deathless, songs that will never seem old. "

- ATHARVA VEDA 10.8.32

Vedic Invocations, which are deemed animistic and crudely pagan by many scholars, merely invoke God through his attributes and functions. He is the Force behind all of nature's mighty forces, the Light behind the light; the Terror behind the terror; the Delight behind delights' the Ultimate Activity behind all activities. Similarly, God's various names in the Vedas are the one God viewed in terms of his attributes, functions, and nature. There is no real suggestion of anything besides the One.

The Yajur Veda (60.17) states that, removed from the context of its creation and its relationship as the ruler of souls, the Ultimate Reality would have only one name: Om which is written in Sanskrit and pronounced more like ***Aum*** and represents the utterly comprehensive syllable, embracing within it the scope of the complete phonetic alphabet containing the potential to create, sustain, and bring about dissolution.

Saint John’s account of the Creation begins at an earlier moment than the Genesis account, and its similarity to Vedic writings is startling.

Comparison between a great deal of Jesus’ actual teachings, as recorded in the Gospels, and Vedic spiritual science continues to fascinate scholars. Considering controversies caused by material in the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as other texts suppressed or even quite clearly falsified, it seems foolish to dismiss any speculations.

**But Western scholars have tried to ridicule the Vedas.**

**To subjugate and destroy a culture, of course, which is a major facet of every imperial adventure, you have to regard it as worthless, savage, and primitive.**

" He is without any form, yet dwells inside and outside all things
With form and shape,
Yet He is entirely free of error, faultless and pure.
He is far beyond anything a human body can comprehend.
And being the Divine Poet. He is inspiration itself. "

He maintains peace and harmony because He is both peace and harmony made manifest.

Yajur Veda 10.8

" He is present in all places and rules everywhere.
His power controls utterly all the three regions:
Earth, the Middle-Air, and the highest heavens.
One foot is rooted in things we understand:
But the other rests in a realm of deep, dark mystery,
A place far beyond the knowledge of mankind."

Artha Veda 7.26.4

" He is substance of every great eternal law,
And He can be perceived in the universal forces of life.
His presence is there in the vast seas,
Across the teeming earth,'
And in the soaring mountain peaks."

Rig Veda 4.40.5

Hardly polytheism. Long before the burgeoning Hindu pantheon; long before Siva, Vishnu, Rama, Ganesh, Parvati, Saraswati, Laxmi, and the 35,999,993 others, this is the God of the Vedas, and religion in its most pristine form.

**Source : Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India. By Paul William Roberts Chapter 13. pg- 299-323 ISBN 1-57322-635-1 Mr. Roberts graduated from and taught literature at Oxford University. He currently lives with his wife and children in Toronto, where he has been the recipient of numerous screenwriting, journalism, and other awards. His writing have appeared in Harper's Conde Nast Traveler, The Toronto Star.**

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